

The Relation of Horticulture to
Ethics and Aesthetics.
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Floriculture

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The industry of flower-growing and improvement has progressed rapidly in recent years. It has reached the state where division of labor has given the culture of a single flower to a specialist, who by hybridizing or by propagating some particular variety wins fame and a fortune.

Great flower farms owned and cultivated by women in California and a few southern states yield good profits by shipping their products in refrigerator cars to large eastern wholesale houses.

In the south some private individuals have raised a few acres of flowers for perfumery manufactories and it is a lucrative and undeveloped field of industry.

Small towns seldom have facilities for obtaining cut flowers or plants for decoration. Since the establishment of wholesale houses

in large cities is so general, a few ladies have opened branch offices in small towns along the roads from the cities, and find that the business is light, Pleasant & well paying.

Comparatively few homes have flowers, and it seems strange and inexplicable in view of the fact that the culture is so easy & fascinating.

It need not take much of a busy housewife's time to have a few flowers. geraniums, begonias, foliage and other commonly cultivated sorts are easily cared for and give but satisfaction for indifferent attention.

A good assortment of bulbs such as narcissus, hyacinths, daffodils and jonquils will provide the home with lovely flowers the entire winter if a little fore sight is used in their selection and getting. With bulbs so cheap and plentiful it seems a shame that any one should be without a window of fragrant flowers that will repay the care given them in the enjoyment they yield.

In the arrangement of flowers the mistake is commonly made of massing different kinds together with small regard to color or harmony.

The French have a peculiarly happy knack of making a growing plant fill some odd corner, or bare place so that it seems a part of its surroundings. They never crowd the blossoms together so that they look like a lot of hot, tired faced - and they never make figs and dogs out of flowers for table decorations or make any atrocious display of far more ill-taste.

A good deal of green should be used with any blossom, making a background that shows off the beauty of the bright colors to best advantage.

White flowers, too, are used as a foil to gaily colored ones, making them clearer and brighter, while adding to the white ones' beauty.

A few plants well chosen and tastefully arranged will give much more pleasure than a great

indiscriminate collection of violets, cacti, roses, begonias and vines packed closely together and almost fighting each other.

A flower screen for a fire place in summer makes a thing of beauty and restfulness through the long, hot days. A few ferns in a zinc pan and some pretty, mossy plant as *Lycopodium dentatatum* is very satisfactory - or ivy can be trained over a wire screen and two or three potted plants may add color.

But while flowers add beauty to the home, they also, through their loveliness have a higher office to fulfill than mere decoration, for by their abundance they teach generosity; by their covering unsightly places, charity; by blooming in lowly places, humility.

Their culture will make a person more deft & delicate, will give him tact and sympathy, for it is a natural educator.

As art teachers they are unexcelled by any human master. Of paintings and statuary are beyond the means of the home-maker, flowers will fill their place admirably, and children raised with flowers cannot help but learn lessons of beauty & harmony of color from them.

They furnish models for taste that will not fail to tell in after life.

A lady noted for her skillful combinations of colors in her dress was asked where she got her models and her answer "from the flowers" should point out the way to a good many unfortunates whose warring colors make them - and their neighbors - dissatisfied and who are at a loss to place the trouble.

If flowers were more common in school rooms they would exert a quieting influence on the weary teacher's nerves, and so through her to her pupils and the children themselves would be unconsciously susceptible to their influence.

The effect that flowers have on the health is surprising and can be testified to by any physician. The idea that flowers in the sleeping room are unhealthy is denied by authority who even say that on the contrary they are beneficial - partly on account of the good that a good many fragrant flowers emit.

In hospitals where benevolent ladies make it their work to distribute flowers to the sick, their power to cheer and refresh can be plainly seen. A sick child will reach for a bright flower and caressing & fondling it will grow quiet. The flower days of the hospitals are looked forward to with eagerness by every patient.

The beauty of a window of flowers, or a bed of gorgeous blossom does not only help the owner, but attracts and rests every weary passer-by. Who will not turn and feast his eyes on a handsome collection of plants? And who will say that the sight does not benefit him?

If in every farmer's home

stress were laid on the necessity of flowers and the boys and girls induced to cultivate them - nursing the sick, and training the strong and rank, they will learn of them and lose some of their awkwardness and backfulness, for they cannot help but grow gentle and refined when living in a vine covered home, with bright flowers for companions.

The love of flowers is inherent in every woman's breast, for a flower is like a baby, with its face upturned to your own, inviting you to taste its sweetness and caress its velvety surface.

Give a child a few flowers to raise and care for, and a love of nature will be engendered. Every child loves flowers, and through them the mother can teach lessons of truth and uprightness. By likening weeds to untruth, and flowers to truth a lesson sharp and practical can be given. Many an old person is carried back to his sunny childhood's days by the sight of flowers he loved then, or that were his mother's favorites.

In the presence of their pure beauty it is almost impossible to be cross and irritable, for their silent example of giving to the world their fragrance, and trying to cheer and brighten will make a grumbler ashamed of himself. A young lady clerk always wore flowers to keep her good tempered and obliging for she said their silent help comforted and made her more patient.

The love of flowers - as any florist can tell - is deep & innate in the heart of the public. Every one from the smiling, innocent babe, to the wretched, hardened criminal is susceptible to their beauty.

Flowers may be regarded as evangelists of peace and gladness. We have them in our churches along with music to lift us to better and higher things.

The lilies and Amaryllids of Palestine are said to be the most beautiful in the world, and they were so much used by Christ in his teachings that we have divine authority for our love of their beauty.

Pure white lilies in their stately, stainless beauty seem to shame all evil thoughts, and their presence and the lessons they teach help a sin-sick soul to live nearer its God.

As there is a place for every plant to grow and blossom, so is there room for the expansion of every manly character. It may be in crowds, but their strength and nobleness will be intensified as are the fragrance and beauty of the flowers blooming in masses.

From birth to death they play a most important part in our lives. The baby, the graduate, the bride, the dead - all are recipients of the messengers of good wishes, congratulations, love and sympathy.